

A CENTURY AND A HALF  
OF  
PITTSBURG AND  
HER PEOPLE

GENEALOGICAL MEMOIRS OF THE LEADING FAMILIES  
OF PITTSBURG AND VICINITY, COMPILED  
UNDER THE EDITORIAL SUPER-  
VISION OF

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THE CRAIG FAMILY. The Craigs, of Pittsburg, to which belonged the Revolutionary soldier and pioneer citizen, Major Isaac Craig, and his influential son, Neville Craig, who wrote the history of his father's life in 1854, came in 1765 or 1766 to America from the neighborhood of Hillsborough, county Down, Ireland, and landed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He had been apprenticed in his native land to the house-carpenter's trade, at which he worked in Philadelphia until he formed an intimate acquaintance with the active and enterprising men of the place and acquired a correct knowledge of the mode of doing business there, after which he assumed the responsibilities of a master carpenter. In this situation he continued to labor until the breaking out of the war for independence. In November, 1775, he received an appointment as the oldest lieutenant of marines in the navy, then being fitted out by this continent—and in that capacity he served ten months on board the "Andrew Doria," commanded by the gallant but unfortunate Nicholas Biddle, who was soon after blown up by the Randolph frigate in an action with a British man-of-war ship. While on board that ship it formed one of the squadron commanded by Commodore Hopkins, who made a descent upon the island of New Providence, in the West Indies, took possession of the two forts, Nassau and Montogu, captured the governor, and seized a large quantity of military stores, then much needed by the American army. Engaged in that expedition were several officers of note, including the gallant Scotchman, Paul Jones, and Commodore Abraham Whipple.

Soon after he returned from this expedition Mr. Craig was promoted from lieutenant to captain of the marines, and in November of the same year was ordered to do infantry duty, which he did several months. He was present at the famous Delaware crossing by Washington, the capture of the Hessian band at Trenton, New Jersey, and was at the battle of Princeton. In February, 1777, the commandant of the marines was ordered to take charge of some pieces of artillery and to instruct the men in that service. From that date until the close of the war Isaac Craig served as an artillery officer. March 3, 1777, Captain Craig was appointed captain of artillery in the regiment then formed under Colonel Thomas Proctor, in which regiment he continued to serve until it was disbanded at the close of the war.

September 11, 1777, he was engaged at the battle of Brandywine. His company suffered great loss, and he was wounded, though not seriously. The ensuing month he was at the battle of Germantown, Pennsylvania. The following winter, that of 1777-78, was spent by the army in log huts at Valley Forge; the suffering of which every reader of history well knows. Early in the spring of 1778 Captain Craig and several officers were ordered to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, "to learn the art of laboratory," which was the preparation of ammunition and general supplies, scientifically tested, for the use in the artillery service especially. Here he labored hard and became skilled, and well it served him in later years, after the Revolutionary war, in preparing ammunition for Generals Wayne, St. Clair and Harrison.

Captain Craig remained at Carlisle from February 1 to August, 1778, and thus was not present with the army during the retreat of the British troops across New Jersey from Philadelphia in June, nor at the battle of Monmouth. Letters still in possession of the family show that Captain Craig, in April, 1779, was in command of the fort at Billingsport, on the Delaware, below Philadelphia. In July of the same year he was in General Sullivan's army, marching against the Six Nation tribes of Indians and their white allies, the British Tories, under the notorious Brandt and the Butlers, in the Genesee valley of New York state. After the return of Sullivan into the settlements, Captain Craig rejoined his regiment, and in January, 1780, was with the army at Morristown, New Jersey. During the intensely cold winter of 1779 and 1780, the night of January 14, the time set for Washington to attack the British on Staten Island, Captain Craig was detailed to command the artillery, consisting of four six-pounders and two five and one-half inch howitzers, but finding the communication had not been cut off for recruits to the enemy, as was supposed, the American army retreated with but small loss, however.

April 20, 1780, an order was issued from General Washington (through Timothy Mattack) for Captain Craig: "Ordered that Lieutenants, Sub-lieutenants, Justices of the Peace and others of the counties through which Captain Craig shall pass, to give him such aid and assistance in transporting such stores and artillery supplies as the occasion may require." In compliance to orders from Colonel Brodhead, Captain Craig took the "Virginia Road" (the Braddock Route), and reached his destination on the evening of May 29, and from that time until the day of his death, in May, 1826, he resided in or near Pittsburg.

In the winter of 1780-81 it was decided by Governor Jefferson, of Virginia, who wrote Washington for a supply of artillery, to engage in the Kentucky expedition against Detroit, and they ordered that Captain Isaac Craig be the

commander-in-chief of such artillery. The supplies being very low at Fort Pitt he was compelled to go to headquarters for additional supplies. The Craig descendants still have much correspondence between Washington, General St. Clair and Captain Craig concerning this expedition. Arrangements having finally been made, he embarked for the Falls of the Ohio the middle of May, acting under General Clarke, who had depended on the Kentucky troops to join him, which they failed to do, thus leaving the proposed expedition a failure. Craig remained at the Falls until November, and finally General Clarke allowed him to return to Fort Pitt. A letter, dated Fort Pitt, December 29, 1781, to General Washington from General Irwin, then in command at Fort Pitt, says: "Captain Craig with the detachment of artillery arrived the 26th. He got up the river with much difficulty, being forty days on the way, occasioned by low water. He was obliged to throw overboard his gun-carriages, but brought his pieces and stores safely."

The same letter mentions the melancholic intelligence of "A Colonel Lochry, of Westmoreland county, and about one hundred men, volunteers for the defense of that country, who started to join General Clarke and were all killed or taken by the Indians." Captain Craig confidently believed that he was watched on his way up the Ohio by Indians, and that nothing but his vigilance prevented his party from an attack.

When Fort Pitt was threatened by the Canadians and Indians it was found that the old log magazine, built when the fort was, was badly decayed and very insecure, so it was planned to build a substantial stone building, which work was placed under the superintendency of "the late Captain, then Major, Craig" (who had been promoted during his absence down the river to take rank October 7, 1782), which as documents show go to prove frightened an intended invasion away, as three hundred British and five hundred Indians had started to attack Fort Pitt, but finding that the place was being rebuilt, and supposedly greatly strengthened, they abandoned the scheme.

In November, 1782, Major Craig had orders to take Lieutenant Rose and six active men and proceed to Cuyahoga and Grand River, for the purpose of learning whether or not the British were attempting to build a military post at Sandusky. They left November 13, taking one horse with them and plenty of food, as they believed; they crossed the Little and Big Beaver and eluded the Indians. One man was left with the horse and supplies at some point en route, and the party was to unite with him again, but they were gone so long they never met again. The weather was cold and roads almost impassable. They did, however, learn that no work had been commenced by the British at Sandusky, and hence retraced their steps homeward. On the way back to Pittsburg the stream had frozen over, but not sufficient to bear a man's weight, so they proceeded, one man ahead broke the ice with a stick, and the party stripped off their clothes and waded the ice-cold water, carrying a torch in one hand and their clothing in the other. Upon reaching the homeward shore, they, with lighted torches, built a camp-fire and dried and warmed themselves before marching home. While they were out as spies in an enemy's country the treaty of peace was being signed between the United States and Great Britain.

With the close of the Revolution and the consequent disbanding of the army and its officers Major Craig, with the remainder, necessarily had to seek some employment, so he and Stephen Bayard, a lieutenant-colonel in the army,

formed a partnership to engage in the mercantile business at Pittsburg, with the design to also deal in lands and town lots. They bought of the Penns the first land sold within the limits of what is now Pittsburg. The date was January 22, 1784; the land was described as: "A certain tract of land lying and being a point formed by the junction of the Monongahela and Allegheny rivers, bounded on two sides by the said rivers, and on the other two sides by the fort and the ditch running to the Allegheny, supposed to contain about three acres." Four months later the Penns concluded to lay out a town here and these two original purchasers waived their rights and took instead, on December 31, 1784, thirty-two lots of ground on the new plat, which really covered all the ground contained in the three-acre tract except that used for streets, and in addition all within the outworks of Fort Pitt. The evils of intemperance were not then so minutely regarded as they are now, so the firm above mentioned extended its business to the establishment of a distillery. They had designed to erect a wind-mill to propel their milling machinery, having seen its utility while in service in the West Indies, but it was not carried out, and soon steam power came into use.

His recollections were that in 1796 Pittsburg had about one hundred and two houses. He wrote in his journal July 25, 1784: "I have provided a house for the reception of the goods when they arrive. I have a distillery." They engaged in mercantile business in 1784, and had a saw mill up the Allegheny. He wrote to a Philadelphia firm in 1784: "I am greatly in need of three barrels of whiskey and one of rum, for want of which my neighbors get all the skins and furs."

Major Craig had a taste for mathematics, was an expert carpenter, was fond of mechanical art and philosophical experiments, and no doubt for this reason he was made a member of the American Philosophical Society in March, 1787, being elected a complimentary member, without his asking.

In September, 1789, an act was passed by the legislature incorporating the First Presbyterian church of the town of Pittsburg; there were eleven trustees named, six of whom were Revolutionary soldiers and all officers, including Major Isaac Craig. He aided in building the original log meeting-house, as well as the later brick edifice. In October, 1789, Stephen Bayard withdrew from his firm relations with Major Craig, who in turn sold his interest to other Philadelphia men and then removed to his farm, adjoining that of his father-in-law and brother-in-law, Presley Neville. He continued there but a short time, however, as with the organization of the new national government his old commander and warm friend, General Henry Knox, was appointed the first secretary of war, and in February, 1791, he offered him the situation of deputy quartermaster and military storekeeper at Pittsburg, then but a mere frontier hamlet. He accepted it, and as that was before "political jobs" gave the clerks fat offices, he had much hard work, but filled the position well. This was prior to the introduction of steamboats, and the quartermaster had to provide flat-boats to convey troops and supplies down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, and other crafts, keel boats, etc., to convey similar articles up the Allegheny and French creek to Fort Franklin and Le Boeuf. In December, 1791, he was called upon by the secretary of war to superintend the construction of a fort, which at his request was called Fort Fayette, after that chivalric Frenchman under whom his brother-in-law, Presley Neville, had served as an aide-de-camp. He also superintended similar works at Wheeling

and Le Boeuf, as well as Presq' Isle. In 1794, when a line of mail boats was established between Pittsburg and Fort Washington, on the Ohio river, he was the director of building such mail boats.

In March, 1791, there was an Indian scare at Pittsburg, and at a mass meeting it was resolved to ask the loan of one hundred guns from the United States, which were in charge of Major Craig, he being the quartermaster. He was told that they would take them by violence unless he gave them up peaceably, and that if the government wanted them within sixty days they would return them. Major Craig disliked to do this, but knowing his powerless condition he let them go. They were not needed, as the sequel was, and later the secretary of war informed him he did right; also that the guns had been given to Pennsylvania as their portion of arms some months previous.

At the time of the "Whiskey Insurrection" in 1794, the house of General John Neville, the inspector of revenues, and the father-in-law of Major Craig, was twice attacked by armed men. The last attempt was successful, his dwelling house, barns and out-building were burnt to the ground; the mail robbed; the inspector, his son and other adherents of the national government driven from the country. At the same time General Anthony Wayne was preparing for his decisive campaign against the western Indians. Reinforcements, supplies and munitions of war had all to be sent from Pittsburg to Fort Washington, and this all under the direction of Major Craig, and he at the same time was being urged by Alexander Hamilton to not abandon his post, and added: "Even in the worst event, you will find safety in the fort." Several nights he was compelled to seek refuge in the fort, but days his duty called him up and down the river on horseback, on which trips he always went well armed. For that and other faithful duties he was tendered the office of commissary general to General Wayne's army in November, 1794, but declined on account of the condition of his family, but he named Major Kirkpatrick, who was at once appointed and remained with the army until Wayne's death at Erie, December 15, 1796.

In 1797, General O'Hara and Major Craig commenced the manufacture of glass at Pittsburg, which (possibly), aside from the works in Fayette county, was the first glass works established west of the Alleghenies.

In the trouble with France and Spain, in 1798, he had to superintend the building of an ocean boat at Pittsburg suitable for such service. He also built two galleys, "President Adams" and "Senator Ross," in 1798.

Like three-fourths of the officers of the Revolutionary army, Major Craig belonged to the party to which Washington and Hamilton belonged, politically, and when Mr. Jefferson came into power Major Craig was removed.

In the war of 1812-14 his services as an expert were in demand as an artilleryman. This was his last public work. During the last years of his life he became financially embarrassed on account of liabilities he had assumed for friends, and his real estate was all sold, and in the autumn of 1815 he removed to a good farm, owned by his wife, on Montour Island in the Ohio river, nine miles below Pittsburg, where he passed his last days in comfort. Born of Protestant parentage; moral character never impeached; he read his Bible daily, even through the trying days of war, and he passed peacefully from earth's shining circle June 14, 1826, and was buried in the First Presbyterian burying ground at Pittsburg. His son paid this tribute to his father: "A sincere Christian, an honest man, a faithful and diligent officer, a good citizen, kind neighbor, affectionate husband and a most indulgent father."